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Image courtesy of the Member

Madeleine Z. Bordallo

1933–

DELEGATE

DEMOCRAT FROM GUAM

2003–

A LIFETIME PUBLIC SERVANT FROM THE PACIFIC U.S. Territory of Guam, Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo won election in 2002 as the first woman to serve as Guam's Delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives. "I know how important it is to tell America about Guam," Bordallo said after being elected. "I would never retreat from what I feel is good for the people of Guam. It has always been my philosophy to fight for the will of the people."¹ Bordallo brings to Congress more than 40 years of public service experience in the executive and legislative branches of the government of Guam and numerous nongovernmental organizations.

While Delegate Bordallo has lived her entire adult life in Guam, she was born on May 31, 1933, in Graceville, Minnesota. In 1948, she moved to Guam with her parents, Chris and Evelyn Zeien, when the U.S. Navy hired her father as principal of Guam's only high school. Graduating from Guam's George Washington High School in 1951, she attended St. Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana, and graduated in 1953 with a degree in music and voice from St. Catherine's College in St. Paul, Minnesota. After returning to Guam that year, she married Ricardo J. "Ricky" Bordallo, a successful businessman from a family with a long political history in the territory.² They have a daughter, Deborah, and a granddaughter, Nicole.

Delegate Bordallo began her public career with local radio and television broadcaster KUAM in 1954. From 1959 until 1963, she produced a television program, "The Women's World," and narrated children's stories on the radio and on television. Her involvement in the community also has been extensive, with Bordallo founding the Guam Council of Women's Clubs, the Guam Symphony Society, *Y Inetnon Famalaoan* (Women for Service), and the Marianas Association for Persons with Disabilities. She also served as president of the Federation of Asian Women's Association and has taken a leadership role in dozens of other community organizations.

Bordallo was introduced to politics through her husband Ricky, who was a founding member of Guam's Democratic Party and served as Governor of Guam from 1975 to 1978 and 1983 to 1986. She first became Guam's Democratic National Committeewoman in 1964, a post she held for 40 years—the longest such service in the nation. As first lady of Guam, Bordallo was a strong advocate of promoting the indigenous Chamorro culture and the arts, both of which are lifelong passions. She entered elective politics herself when she became the first woman from the Democratic Party to win a seat in the Guam legislature, serving a total of five terms.³ Following the death of her husband in 1990, she made an unsuccessful bid for governor, becoming the first woman in Guam's history to lead her party's ticket.⁴ In 1994, she was elected to the first of two consecutive terms as Guam's first woman lieutenant governor. In this role, she championed the cause of island beautification as a way to enhance Guam's tourism-based economy.

In 2002, Bordallo was elected to the 108th Congress (2003–2005) as Guam's fourth Delegate to Congress, winning the open seat with 65 percent of the vote.⁵ Delegate Bordallo was appointed to the Armed Services Committee, where she serves on the subcommittees on Readiness and Projection Forces. Bordallo has emphasized the importance of Guam's strategic location as the military considers force realignment in the region. She also serves on the Resources Committee, which has jurisdiction over territorial matters, with positions on the Subcommittees on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans and National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands. Bordallo also is a member of the Committee on Small Business and serves as Secretary of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus.

Seven of Delegate Bordallo's bills were signed into law by the President during her first term. Some of her successful legislative initiatives in the 108th Congress included amending Guam's Organic Act to create an independent and unified judiciary, increasing federal assistance for the impact of immigration resulting from Compact Treaty obligations, and authorizing greater federal funding for the control and eradication of the invasive Brown Tree Snake. Bordallo's legislative efforts have benefited from the close relationships she has established with other territorial delegates, the Hawaiian delegation, and committee leadership on both sides of the aisle. She also has worked in a bipartisan approach with other elected officials from Guam to address federal issues that are important to the island. In 2004 and 2006, Delegate Bordallo ran unopposed for re-election.

FOR FURTHER READING

Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress, "Madeleine Bordallo," <http://bioguide.congress.gov>

NOTES

- 1 "Highest Vote-Getters Look Ahead," 6 November 2002, *Pacific Daily News*: 5A.
- 2 "Bordallo for Congress," www.mzbforcongress.com/aboutmadeleine/bio.shtml (accessed 27 November 2002).
- 3 "Bordallo for Congress."
- 4 "Biodata of Madeleine Z. Bordallo" http://ns.gov.gu/webtax/lrgov_bio.html (accessed 27 November 2002).
- 5 *Politics in America*, 2004 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 2003): 1099.